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SUBJECT: ISABEL DOS SANTOS: BIO NOTE

(U) Classified by DCM Jeff Hawkins, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Isabel dos Santos, the eldest daughter of President Dos Santos, met briefly with the DCM on 7 December. Isabel dos Santos is Angola's most successful businesswoman (due in large measure to her father's support), speaks impeccable colloquial English, and comes across as sophisticated, polished, and extremely articulate. Dos Santos mentioned she will be traveling to New York mid-December with her husband to set up a joint art exhibition between African and African-American artists. She portrayed her husband, who she said has his own art foundation, as a serious art collector, noting he has a large collection of both contemporary African and other art. She, too, seems keenly interested, noting how much she admired the city of Miami's attempts in recent years to attract and showcase European artists.

¶2. (C) DCM asked Dos Santos about her role in Angolan political life, and more specifically her involvement in the MPLA's party congress, which opens on December 7. She ruefully noted that her three young children - ages 1, 3, and 5 - do not leave her much time for politics but nevertheless appeared focused on the opening of the MPLA conference, which she would attend later the same day. She underscored the importance of getting delegates from all over the country together and stressed the revision of party statutes that will take place at the congress. She explained that with all the work that had gone into preparing for the conference there should be few surprises, with the congress more an act of getting everyone on same page, rather than serving as a forum for debate.

¶3. (C) Comment. Isabel, who has on occasion been cited as a potential successor to her father, left us with the impression, after this short meeting, that she was more focused on her many business dealings, outside interests like art collecting, and family than on positioning herself for a political future. That said, she demonstrated a keen interest in the MPLA congress, and was clearly familiar with the organizational details of the event, even citing the number of delegates that would be attending from around the country. End Comment.
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